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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: NORTH KOREA, U.S. ARMS SALES
TO TAIWAN

11. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taipei dailies focused their coverage September 21 on Premier Frank Hsieh's administrative report before the Legislative Yuan and his argument with KMT Legislator and former Kaohsiung Mayor Wu over the city's mass rapid transit system; a scandal concerning a Taipei City Government official who allegedly was having an affair with his secretary; President Chen's extended stopover in

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Alaska; and U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless' statement (delivered by U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency's Security Cooperation Operations Principal Director Edward Ross at the 2005 U.S.-Taiwan Defense Industry Conference Monday) concerning Taiwan's blocked arms procurement bill. The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran a banner headline on its front page on Lawless' statement that read: "U.S. official warns that the United States has no obligation to defend Taiwan." All the other Chinese-language newspapers also carried news stories in their inside page on Lawless' statement, Taiwan legislators' reactions to his statement, and the pan-Blue alliance's successful blocking of the U.S. arms procurement bill in the Legislative Yuan for the 29th time.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an opinion piece in the centrist "China Times" and an editorial in the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" both discussed the agreements reached at the Six-Party Talks Monday. The opinion piece by Taiwan Think Tank's Foreign Policy Studies Director Lai I-chug described the talks as Beijing and Pyongyang joining hands to thwart the United States' diplomatic efforts in the Asia-Pacific area. The editorial urged Taiwan to pay attention to China's increasingly important role in the talks and its attempt to crush Taiwan. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post," however, raised the question of whether the method of bringing in outside parties to resolve the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula can be used to resolve the Taiwan issue. In terms of Lawless' statement and the U.S. arms procurement bill, Washington correspondent Nadia Tao said in a new analysis in the "Liberty Times" that what Taiwan needs to be concerned about is its loss of minimum deterrence capabilities and the respect of the island's American friends. End summary.

11. North Korea

A) "Beijing, Pyongyang Working Together to Thwart the United States"

Lai I-chug, Foreign Policy Studies Director of the Taiwan Think Tank, commented in an opinion piece in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (9/21):

"The fourth round of the Six-Party Talks reached a consensus on 'agreements on some principles' seven days after they resumed meeting. But judged from the contents of these agreements, the United States is the biggest loser while China and North Korea have both attained major achievements. It would be appropriate to say that both China and North Korea have joined hands to thwart the United States' diplomatic efforts in the Asia-Pacific area severely. .

"In fact, when Washington got defeated in the fourth round of 'the talks over the Korean Peninsula's nuclear program,' it also missed the best timing to handle the nuclear weapons of North Korea. In the 'agreements of principles,' the parties involved agreed to leave the nuclear weapon issue unresolved until future talks. They simply procrastinated the problem and sat idly for it to brew and heat up. When Washington signed this

muddle-worded agreement, it even boasted unabashedly by calling it a major breakthrough. Washington's attitude was like telling the Asian countries that the United States has no intention to resolve the problems in Asia-Pacific. It also made Iran realize that as long as it really possesses nuclear weapons, with China's support it could easily walk out of the window of nuclear weapons. Washington's 'non-proliferation' credibility was completely destroyed by the results of the talks, and it would help nothing but perhaps accelerating the pace for a nuclear weapon race in the future.

"China, which shows no interest in dealing with North Korea's nuclear problem, is the biggest winner in this round of talks. Beijing, which was originally the one that suffered greatest pressure in the fourth round of talks, regained control of the talks by shifting the focus of the meetings to signing an agreement on principles. It has also succeeded in keeping the talks go on without falling apart, thus avoiding a direct showdown with the United States at the United Nations. Moreover, it sought to restrain Japan via Pyongyang by hosting the talks and controlling the security agenda of Northeast Asia, and thereby further bogging down the 'U.S.-Japan alliance.' Judged from this result, Beijing's strategy is a real success. .

"For Taiwan, the island should be alerted by the U.S. State Department's attitude in handling the Asia-Pacific affairs, as demonstrated in the way it handled the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula this time. In fact, given the current situation in the State Department where some of its old staffers have left but the new ones have yet to assume position, a very dangerous symptom is occurring with regard to Washington's management of the Asia-Pacific region. The fact that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice failed to attend the ASEAN summit has led to suspicion by the ASEAN nations about whether Washington really attaches great importance to the Asia-Pacific region. . Washington's defeated concessions made during this round of the Six-Party Talks simply to keep the talks go on gave people the impression that the State Department seems to be lacking a comprehensive strategic view toward the region and has no implementation ability at all. ."

B) "Six-Party Talks Reach a Consensus, But There Is Still a Long Way to Lasting Peace in Northeastern Asia."

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] editorialized (9/21):

". Even though Taiwan is not a participant in the Six-Party Talks, nor is it directly involved in the tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the island must still be gravely concerned and alert about the situation development on the peninsula. .

"We particularly need to pay more attention to the increasingly important role played by China in the multi-lateral talks that involved multiple organizations. As China has gradually developed itself into the world's factory, attracting huge foreign investments, selling its goods around the whole globe, and accumulating numerous fortunes and resources, it has become an irreversible trend that China will play an increasingly significant role on the international stage. China is also using every means it can to take advantage of its superiority to contain and isolate Taiwan. The Beijing government has a comprehensive, well-planned strategy in an attempt to crush Taiwan from inside."

C) "Can North Korea Nuclear Pact Serve as Model for Taiwan?"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (9/21):

"If the landmark agreement on energy aid for North Korea's promise to abandon its nuclear-weapons programs - reached at the six-party talks on Tuesday in the host-capital Beijing - can be backed up by enforceable implementation plans expected to be worked out in a follow-up meeting in November, it will lead to the elimination of a major flashpoint in this part of the world.

"If so, the world will naturally shift its attention to another potential tinderbox in the region: Taiwan. But will it be possible that the method of bringing in third parties to jointly persuade North Korea into giving up its nuclear aspirations in the interest of

peace and stability be used to resolve the issue of Taiwan? .

"Such tensions [in Taiwan] are potentially explosive and need to be tackled at source. Given that, mediation by major world powers appears to be the best possible approach in the absence of effective efforts by Taipei and Beijing to settle their contentious ideological differences. .

"Undoubtedly, the United States is the country most appropriate, and most influential, to play a role in mediating the political differences between Taiwan and China. But Washington has been reluctant to take on such a job, a position far different from its policy on North Korea. .

"But this Washington policy of wanting to preserve the political status quo does not go far enough to effectively deal with the independence issue, thus unable to remove the fuse of tensions that have the potential to plunge Taiwan and the Chinese mainland into a war eventually.

"There is a strong reason behind this U.S. policy. A Taiwan remaining separate from China and without moving to provoke Beijing by declaring independence or writing a new constitution to achieve formal statehood will best suit Washington's strategic interests. .

"Given the current cross-strait political circumstances, however, there seems to be little possibility of the two sides being drawn into a war by their sovereignty differences. The main reason is that Beijing is becoming more flexible in promoting exchanges with Taiwan as long as Taipei does not go so far as to cross the red lines it has set in its anti-secession law enacted early this year.

"But the newly achieved peaceful atmosphere across the Taiwan Strait could be disturbed by President Chen's new intentions to forge a security alliance with Washington and Tokyo, taking advantage of the two governments' desire to contain China's rise. Chen's policy appears to have won positive responses, though mostly made in a low-key manner.

"Whatever forms such a triangular cooperation finally take, it would surely give a major boost to Chen's position in addressing Beijing's relations, and encourage him to stick with his political cause. Such developments would certainly worry Beijing and prompt it to adopt retaliatory measures. ."

12. U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan

A) "Halt of the [U.S.] Arms Procurements Is Eroding the United States' Support for Taiwan"

Washington correspondent Nadia Tsao said in a news analysis of the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] (9/21):

". Since [U.S.] President George W. Bush approved to sell a bunch of advanced weapons to Taiwan in 2001, Taiwan, in the eyes of Washington, has gradually put on an irresponsible and immature image by continuing to cling tightly to the legs of the United States. Washington has used both the carrot and stick and has almost exhausted every means it can [to push for the arms deal]. .

"Washington is both concerned and awed by Beijing's upgraded and expanded defense capabilities. In addition to the fact that Beijing is getting more and more flexible in its diplomatic skills, the American decision-making elites, no matter whether they like Beijing or not, have to admit that Beijing is a respectable and a dreadful rival.

"Taiwan is being put in an unfavorable position on the international stage. What's more awful is that the people inside Taiwan pay almost no attention to its inferior position in both the military and diplomatic aspects.

"The candid criticisms made by [U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard] Lawless and [U.S. Defense

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Security Cooperation Agency's Security Cooperation Operations Principal Director Edward] Ross sounded indeed like criticisms from 'the U.S. emperor,' which were arrogant and hurt Taiwan's self-esteem. But shouldn't the political parties in Taiwan ask themselves what have they really done for Taiwan's

national defense since 2001?

"Taiwan has absolutely no military capabilities to attack China. For now, what Taiwan needs to be concerned about is losing its minimum deterrence capabilities and also the respect of our American friends."

KEEGAN